





SOME ASPECTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NAVAL  
LINE OFFICER AS AN EXECUTIVE

by

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The George Washington University

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Navy Graduate Comptrollership Program

THE HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NAVAL  
STRATEGY AS A RESULT OF THE

BY

Gen. Sir J. H. D. G. G. G.

The Hon. Sir J. H. D. G. G. G.

London, 1900

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## I. HISTORICAL AND GENERAL

Since the days of the Revolution the naval service has been fortunate to have within it intelligent far-seeing and tenacious individuals who recognized the essentiality of competent executives in that service if it were to be efficient and successful.

John Paul Jones was particularly articulate in expressing the need for and nature of competent naval executives together with manners in which they might be developed. In an open letter to the Marine Committee of the Continental Congress in January, 1777 he wrote:

"None other than a Gentleman, as well as a Seaman, both in theory and practice is qualified to support the character of a Commissioned Officer in the Navy, nor is any man fit to command a Ship of War who is not also capable of communicating his Ideas on Paper in Language that becomes his Rank."

Definitely enumerated therein are the attributes required of a competent dynamic executive.

The same year, in April, he wrote to John Hancock, then President of the Congress, as follows:

"It may also be expedient to establish an Academy at each Dock Yard under proper Masters, whose duty it should be to instruct the officers of the Fleet when in Port in the Principles and application of the Mathematics, Drawing, Fencing and other manly Arts and Accomplishments. It will be requisite that young Men serve a certain term in Quality of Midshipmen, or Master's mate before they are examined for promotion."

In 1836 a series of resolutions were drawn up and adopted by the officers on board the U.S.S. CONSTITUTION and endorsed by the officers of the U.S.S. VANDALIA. Quoted therefrom is the following:

"That we deem education to be of peculiar importance to the sea-officers, and that amid the progressive improvements in the arts and sciences which distinguish the present age the military marine would be most conspicuous if guided in its advance by the lights of education."

Within the limits of funds and facilities available progress in fact went forward to match these and similar expressions. The embryo executives





of the naval service were brought into the service as midshipmen and their practical instruction on board cruising ships of the Fleet augmented by school masters to supply theoretical instruction.

The service was not, however, satisfied with the foregoing method of development. It was too loose and in danger of constant minimum by the demands of distracting duties in cruising vessels. Finally, after years of discouraging rebuffs from succeeding Congresses, through the determined effort of George Bancroft, Secretary of the Navy, in 1845 the United States Naval Academy was founded. The mission of that institution was to provide young men with a firm foundation of theoretic knowledge who might join the fleet and therein apply theory in practice to mature into able executives. The mission of this Academy has been, since its establishment, identical to its mission as stated in the present:

"Through study and practical instruction to provide the midshipmen with a basic education and knowledge of the naval profession; to develop them morally, mentally, and physically; and by precept and example to indoctrinate them with the highest ideals of duty, honor, and loyalty; in order that the naval service may be provided with graduates who are capable junior officers in whom have been developed the capacity and foundation for future development in mind and character leading toward a readiness to assume the highest responsibilities of citizenship and government."

Parenthetically it may be here noted that in 1947, the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps, with units at fifty-two colleges and universities, was established to augment the annual requirements of embryo career executives in the naval service. The mission of the Corps is:

"to provide a source from which qualified officers may be obtained for the Navy, the Marine Corps, the Naval Reserve, and the Marine Corps Reserve, by a permanent system of training and instruction in essential naval subjects at civil educational institutions."

The naval service has long been alert also to the fact that a competent executive must not only have a firm foundation but that periodically he should be given opportunity to engage in further study without the distraction of operating service demands from time

of the world market were caused by the war in Germany.

and their production facilities were being destroyed.

These measures in the world market, in the long run,

The world market, however, is still in a state of

of depression. It was the result of the war in Germany.

of the demand of the world market for goods, which

after years of depression, is now beginning to recover.

the economic effect of the war in Germany, however, is

that the world market is now beginning to recover.

production was in a state of depression, and the world

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to make this market. The market is now beginning to

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to time in order that he mature properly.

Stephen B. Luce, himself a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, was one of the officers in the naval service who recognized the need for postgraduate education of naval officers. After continuing determined effort he was instrumental in effecting the establishment of the U.S. Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island, in 1884. The mission and objectives of the College are essentially as he conceived them:

"Mission: To further an understanding of the fundamentals of warfare, with emphasis on their application to future naval warfare, in order to prepare officers for higher command.

Objectives: (1) To increase each officer's knowledge of the fundamentals of warfare, strategy, tactics, logistics, weapons, national and international affairs, and other related subjects which contribute to an understanding of warfare.

(2) To improve each officer's use of his reasoning powers and ability to apply his knowledge to specific problems in order to arrive at logical solutions."

The complexities arising from technological advances in combination with the service-wide recognition of Luce's and associates soundness of concept of postgraduate education led, in 1909, to the establishment of the Naval Postgraduate School as part of the U.S. Naval Academy. This school, now a separate entity of the naval service in accordance with Public Law 303, 80th Congress, 1st Session, has been given the following mission:

"to conduct and direct the advanced instruction and training of commissioned officers in practical and theoretical duties in order to meet the requirements of the Navy".

An integral part of the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School is the General Line School. Presently the mission of this School is to provide officers transferred to regular status from either temporary or reserve status with a sound foundation for their naval career. After 1954, however, it is anticipated that all officers will receive one year of instruction there upon completion of their initial sea cruise. The objectives of





the course in that concept are quoted herewith:

"the function of a naval officer as an administrator is emphasized through such studies as naval organization, personnel management, methods of training personnel, classification, leadership, and logistics. --- Also includes indoctrination in social, economic, and scientific relationships of the naval service to the world at large and a broadening of the student's knowledge in all respects of naval combat and in the relationships of the Navy to other branches of the armed forces."

## II. THE CURRENT PROCESS

The foregoing has been, in the main, a historical overview of the naval service's recognition that supervision is a profession; that the naval executive must not only be technically competent but also be able to administer and to most efficiently achieve such stature should be afforded periodic opportunity to buttress practice by academic instruction and evaluation.

The normal line officer's career can be divided into three major periods:

1. The Basic Period -- the first six years, in the grades of Ensign and Lieutenant (junior grade).
2. The Technical Period -- the period of from 6 to 12 years of service, in the grade of Lieutenant.
3. The Command and Staff Period -- the twelfth to thirtieth year, in the grades of Lieutenant Commander, Commander, and Captain.

### The Basic Period

An Ensign upon receiving his initial commission, whether he be from the Naval Academy or the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps, will normally be sea duty in a ship of the fleet. Essentially still a trainee, this first duty will provide the practical work and experience to implement the education received as a midshipman. Quoted herewith is an article of the U.S. Navy Regulations 1948, which is particularly applicable to these officers:

"The Commanding Officer shall:

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 AS WRITTEN BY A MAN OF LETTERS IN THE SEVENTEENTH  
 CENTURY. BY JOHN ADAMS. VOL. I.  
 LONDON: Printed by J. DODD, in Pall-mall, 1789.

## THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

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 AS WRITTEN BY A MAN OF LETTERS IN THE SEVENTEENTH  
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1. Endeavor to increase the specialized and general professional knowledge of the personnel under his command by the frequent conduct of drills, classes, and instruction, and by the utilization of appropriate fleet and service schools.

2. Encourage and provide assistance and facilities to the personnel under his command who seek to further their education in professional or other subjects.

3. Require those lieutenants (junior grade) who have less than two years commissioned or warrant service, and all ensigns:

(a) To comply with the provisions prescribed for their instruction by the Chief of Naval Personnel.

(b) To keep journals, to attend classes, and to receive appropriate practical instruction, as the commanding officer deems advisable.

4. Detail the officers referred to in paragraph 3 of this article to as many duties successively as practicable. This rotation of duties should be completed during the first two years of the officers commissioned service. The commanding officer shall indicate on the fitness report of each such officer the duties to which he has been assigned, the total period of assignment, and the degree of qualification in such duties.

5. Designate a senior officer or officers to act as advisers to the officer referred to in paragraph 3 of this article. These senior officers shall assist such junior officers to a proper understanding of their responsibilities and duties, and shall endeavor to cultivate in them officer-like qualities, a sense of loyalty and honor, and an appreciation of naval customs and professional ethics."

The rotation to duties, supervision and counseling should develop a balanced understanding of and the capability in the work and organization of a ship. It will also assist the young officer in the early determination of his field of major interest and ability. These first six years will also provide for a variation of duty in ship types



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with short assignments to specific billets. Ordered in attendance upon, as temporary additional duty, from time to time during this period, to various fleet school courses of comparatively short length for practical and basic instruction in subjects of immediate application to the fleet, such as gunnery, electronics, communications, and damage control, the young officer's technical competency is enhanced, the meanwhile broadening himself by exchange of ideas by contact with officers from units other than his immediate command. It is in the basic period that the officer has his best opportunity to develop a plan for his career and set tentative intermediate goals for the pattern.

#### The Technical Period

After some six years of commissioned service, most of which will have been duty as a junior officer in several of the operating departments of ships, an officer becomes eligible for his first comparatively long tour of shore duty (two years). The first year of this shore duty will (after 1954) be in attendance upon the General Line School Course. Thereafter the officer may be ordered to further instruction either at the Naval Postgraduate School or at a certain civilian college or university. The purpose of these latter courses is to provide advanced technical knowledge and competence in special fields of naval interests. Postgraduate courses are intended not to make specialists out of the line officers who attend them but rather to produce officers especially qualified in branches of the naval profession in addition to their general qualifications in the command branch. Officers are ordered to such courses from those who have requested to be considered therefor upon recommendation of boards of senior officers convened in the Bureau of Naval Personnel who carefully weigh the capabilities of the applicants by evaluation of background and reports of fitness.





Assignment to such duty is also limited by the allocation of numbers entering specific fields to best serve the Navy as a whole and to utilize funds appropriated for education most effectively. Officers not assigned postgraduate training should not, however, consider they have lost their only chance to follow a specialty. There are opportunities such as correspondence courses offered by the Naval War College, The Industrial College of the Armed Forces, The Bureau of Naval Personnel, and the United States Armed Forces Institute, which together with assignments ashore and at sea, enable an ambitious officer to acquire equivalent knowledge and competence. In fact the Department has been placing increased emphasis on this form of education and has indicated cognizance thereof will be taken in affording officers completing such courses special consideration in assignment to duties.

#### The Command and Staff Period

In a normal career, after twelve years of service, an officer may be considered to have completed his special and detailed education. He will have spent about nine years at sea in various types of vessels in various billets of graduated responsibility, at least one year under formal instruction, and the remainder in a unit of the naval establishment on shore. His responsibilities now become increasingly less of technical detail and more of administration. His duties will involve greater responsibility and authority. For duty at sea he will be assigned to command vessels and to responsible positions on Force or Fleet Staffs. On shore he may be ordered to instruction at the Naval War College, The Industrial College of the Armed Forces, or The National War College. These courses are essentially seminars which will give opportunity for research and exchange of points of view. Such courses, though desirable are not essential, for the officer may in his continuing rotation of duties, execution of responsibilities, and mature





selection of material available in the form of reading and discussion with contemporaries, supply the equivalent as his career continues.

### III. SUMMARY

The current process of development which is one of service performance with its trainee aspects, "on the job" training, day to day contacts and evaluation, rotation to duties at sea and on shore in varied types of organizations, augmented by post graduate education and the opportunities of correspondence courses and study through reading of professional and general matter. <sup>The process</sup> ~~is one which~~ has undergone constant development since the organization of the naval service. It is a composite of techniques observed in education, industry, and in other military organizations of the world. It is not, however, considered a final pattern. Additional techniques such as psychological testing are being evaluated and those currently employed are reviewed frequently to maintain them dynamic and effective. Such search for improvement is the naval service's recognition of its responsibility to the public and our nation's future together with its sense of responsibility to those guiding the service thus far.







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